

# R8 Public Affairs and Involvement Program

## Superfund Community Involvement Workload Analysis

February 2015

"Public health and environmental protection impacts affect us most significantly where we live—at the community level."  
EPA Strategic Plan FY2015-2018



Thanks for your time here today to let us present information on the value and workload of the Region 8 SF Community Involvement team.

This presentation is a result of the request made by SLT to examine SF resources, in general, and then specifically, for us, to look at current and needed community involvement support for successful SF site management in the Region.

As we have learned, data analysis always takes longer than we expect and being a service organization, our workload is not as quantifiable as we might like, but we did our best with available data, input, and qualitative analysis as well.

Thought it might be of value to look at the

- 1) Types of services our Community Involvement Coordinators provide to the Region's SF site teams and communities
- 2) Where those requirements/recommendations come from
- 3) Value and benefits of those services
- 4) Analysis of workload
- 5) Recommendations

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# What and Who is the Public Affairs and Involvement Unit?

- A team of public affairs specialists who serve as Community Involvement Coordinators (CICs) - to advise and implement community involvement and outreach at Superfund and Emergency Response sites.
- As part of the SF Site team, CICs work with RPMs, OSCs, SAMs, attorneys and toxicologists to provide CI assistance at all stages of site development from Preliminary Site Assessment to NPL Deletion and Removal Actions.
- CICs : Jennifer Chergo, Jasmin Guerra, Jennifer Lane, Cynthia Peterson and Chris Wardell (4.8 FTE)

Work on over 71 active SF sites, 15 SA sites, 9 Removal Actions

*Averaging 7-13 SF/SA/ER sites each*

*Down 7 CICs since 2011 –including 2 in MT*



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Unit was established as part of OCPI to allow for independent oversight of SF community involvement activities and a direct connection with OCPI's media, congressional, and communication expertise. Co-Located with EPR SF Section Chiefs and RPMs on the 5th floor allows for immediate access for project team interaction.

\* Refer to brochure and the numerous SF pipeline services we provide.

4.8 CICs providing community involvement and outreach for everything from SF site assessment to reuse and redevelopment assistance. Each CIC averages 7 to 13 SF/Emergency Response site with varying levels of outreach needs.

(Just as an aside, down 7 CIC's since 2011 (2 were located in Helena)).

\* Refer to SF site hand out.

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# Who are our stakeholders?

- Directly and indirectly impacted communities
- Local, State, and Federal governments
- State and congressional representatives
- Tribes
- News media
- Academia
- Private industry
- Non-profit organizations
- Faith based
- Recreational organizations
- PRP's



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# What guides community involvement?

- Community Involvement at Superfund Sites
  - Legal requirements
    - CERCLA, NCP, Plain Writing Act of 2010 (not specific to Superfund)
  - Additional community involvement activities are guided by:
    - Superfund Community Involvement Handbook
    - Superfund Community Involvement Toolkit
    - Policies, Directives & Community Engagement Initiative
    - Site specific experience



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Legal requirements are rarely the driving factor for why outreach takes place and only reflects the minimum of what's often necessary for a site to be successful.

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# EPA's Strategic Plan for FY 2015-2018

## Goal 3: Cleaning Up Communities and Advancing Sustainable Development

- "EPA will **work with communities** to address risks posed by intentional and accidental releases of hazardous substances into the environment and ensure that **communities have an opportunity to participate** in environmental decisions that affect them."

### Cross Agency Strategy

- Working Toward a Sustainable Future:  
"EPA will emphasize transparency and clarity in its communications, including **environmental education outreach**."
- Working to Make a Visible Difference in Communities:  
"EPA will rely on a variety of approaches, including **improved meaningful outreach to communities** . . . and expanded technical assistance and research to improve public health and the environmental performance of communities."



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## FY2015 Regional Annual Commitments

- RAC-OCPI-01 Proactive Outreach and In-reach
- RAC-OCPI-02 Limited English Proficiency Plan
- RAC-EPR-05 Libby Asbestos Superfund Site Property Cleanups
- RAC-ECEJ-07 Region 8 Environmental Justice Integration

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RAC-OCPI-01 Proactive Outreach and Inreach Report progress in meeting the following objectives: 1) OCPI will complete visits with internal Region 8 offices to discuss the options for relating each office's environmental story, through social and traditional media, outreach initiatives and events, and other means of public awareness; 2) Establish a Communication Liaison in each office to serve as conduit to serving up stories, issues, and events for development and publicity as well as reaching into the organization for story 'mining', content vetting, leveraging resources to help, and priority setting; and 3) Promote Internal Good News Stories through use of the 8-Net page, Region 8 Talks, and 3-minute presentations at All Hands Meetings.

RAC-OCPI-02 Limited English Proficiency Plan Continue to engage regional employees to implement LEP Plan; document our LEP activities and successes of those activities; identify gaps; and engage the region in addressing these gaps.

RAC-EPR-05 Libby Asbestos Superfund Site Property Cleanups Number of properties cleaned up.

RAC-ECEJ-07 Region 8 Environmental Justice Integration Report accomplishments and completion of activities outlined in the strategy, which lead to improved integration of EJ and the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, national origin, or income.

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## Benefits of Community Involvement and Outreach

- Provides single POC for all stages of site development.
- Improves public perception and 'humanizes EPA.'
- Reduces community anxiety and fear.
- Distills very technical information into plain language.
- Builds knowledge and trust and allows for informed consent.
- Improves efficiency and ensures support by investing early in relationship building and avoiding last minute surprises.
- Increases long term support and buy-in for a remedy.
- Provides opportunities to collaborate and celebrate successes.



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Public perception and humanizes- not just a Federal bureaucracy but a point of contact who can get answers and/or the right people to the table.

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### CI Site Prioritization Criteria

<b>High Profile</b>	Larger sites, highly engaged communities, highly visible, local and State official interest, Congressional interest, local and/or national media interest, EJ concerns, community demanding to be involved in clean-up decisions, CAGs and/or TAGs, CI legal requirements, controversial issues, invasive cleanups that impact business, homeowners and personal space, long term, institutional controls that may directly impact stakeholders, maximum amount of outreach materials needed (i.e. communication strategies, fact sheets, public notices, public meetings, etc.). Interest in site reuse and redevelopment. GPRA and SCAP targets. Facility property transfers.
<b>Medium Profile</b>	Some community interest and local visibility, local official interest, local media, potential for Congressional interest, EJ concerns, CAG and/or TAGs, CI legal requirements, GPRA and SCAP targets, some outreach materials necessary, budgeted technical work, non-EPA lead (State or other Federal Lead), potential to be controversial, potential for good news stories and events, interest in site reuse and redevelopment.  At typical peak activity-
<b>Lower Profile</b>	Limited to no community interest, limited local official interest, and minimal media interest. Minimal outreach materials necessary. Budgeted technical work. CI legal requirements. Alternative sites, Federal Facility or State lead sites. Potential for good news stories and events, interest in site reuse and redevelopment.  At typical peak activity-



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High profile does not mean less outreach needs at other superfund sites nor that other sites are not a priority.

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# Steps Taken to Increase Efficiency

- Established Site Prioritization Scheme
- With input from Program Director and Remedial Section Chiefs:
  - 1) Realigned work load to priority sites (3x)
  - 2) Established POCs for 2 of the 3 Remedial Unit
  - 3) Offered help to MT for Silver-Bow, CFAC and Smurfit Stone
  - 4) Established Liaison for EJ, Reuse and Redevelopment
- Review feedback from Superfund Program Review Process
- Delineated required and recommended community involvement services throughout the SF lifecycle (Brochure)
- Social Media training and tag-teaming with OCPI and HQ Media Team
- Engage other OCPI resources (Libby, social media for ER, Congressional)
- Superfund Website Update Process and engage OCPI resources
- Cross Program coordination with EPR/ECEJ/PAI to develop a protocol to address cross-programmatic issues.
- Coordinate with EJ and Library for demographic information at sites.



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Steps already taken to balance workload and incorporate Recommendations

TAG grants- Consuming 1+ CIC FTE

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# What if we don't listen to and involve the community?

- Unable to meet EPA's Strategic plan for enhancing community engagement.
- Legal vulnerabilities
- Unable to plan and coordinate outreach including:
  - Inability to anticipate and plan based on community concerns
  - Negative media
  - Congressional Inquiries
  - IG Requests
  - Lack of rumor control
  - Reactionary versus proactive approach
- Impacts to Superfund sites with EJ needs
- Decreased long term support and buy-in for a remedy and therefore environmental and public health protection.
- Decreased efforts for celebrating milestones (ex: Libby Riverfront Park, Leadville, Eureka, Rocky Flats, Milltown, ASARCO, Midvale, etc.)
- Lack of transparency at emergency response sites
- Outdated and/or inaccurate website information
- Decreased partnering with local stakeholder



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## Resource Impacts to EPA:

Denver Radium (Shattuck) – change in the remedy

Silvertip – no PIO support initially

Keller Oil Spill – no CIC support elevated to Congressional Staff and bad press

Butte, MT – EJ concerns, bad press, Congressional interest

Libby – Bark, IG, Vocal minority

Positives - Libby MT Draft RA and Tox Values

Eureka

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# The Take Away

- Making a visible difference in communities starts with engaging the community early and often to ensure that EPA can successfully educate all interested stakeholders on the importance of protecting public health and the environment.
- Efficiencies in our resources means working collaboratively across programs and with local, State, Tribal and other Federal agencies to ensure that the impacted public (including EJ communities) can effectively participate in and improve EPA's responsiveness to community perspectives and therefore allow for timely cleanups.
- The more we invest in relationship building with the public the easier it is to collaboratively celebrate successes.
- **How much we want to invest in our public is up to us.**

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# Questions/Discussion



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